

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed April 5, 2004. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's consideration of the Application. Claims 1, 16, and 17 have been canceled. Claims 2, 4, 7, 10, 18, and 21 have been amended to clarify, more particularly point out, and more distinctly claim inventive concepts previously present in these claims. Applicant makes no admission that these amendments narrow the scope of the claims or that the amendments are required for patentability. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added by the amendments to the claims. In order to advance prosecution of this Application, Applicant has responded to each notation by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Objected to Claims

The Examiner indicated that Claims 2-15 and 18-25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (Office Action, page 2, paragraph 5.) Claims 2, 4, 7, 10, 18, and 21 have been amended to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Claims 2, 4, 7, 10, 18, and 21 are allowable. Claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11-15, 19, 20, and 22-25 are allowable based on their respective dependence on Claims 2, 4, 7, 10, 18, and 21 and further because they recite numerous additional patentable distinctions over the references of the rejection

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of Claims 2-15 and 18-25.

Section 102 Rejection

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,198,857 to Grasis et al. ("Grasis"). Claims 1, 16, and 17 have been canceled.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of all the pending claims.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this case in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact Keiko Ichiye, the Attorney for Applicant, at the Examiner's convenience at (214) 953-6494.

Applicant has enclosed a check in the amount of \$258.00 for the additional independent claims. Although Applicant believes no additional fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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